

**PIERCE COUNTY DISTRICT COURT**  
930 Tacoma Avenue S., Room 239, Tacoma, WA 98402  
253-798-7487

**NAME CHANGE INFORMATION**

**WHERE TO FILE** - Any person requesting to change his/her name or that of their child may apply to the District Court in which they reside. Name changes are accepted Monday through Friday, 8:30 am – 4:00 pm at the public counter located at 930 Tacoma Ave S, Room 239, (County-City Building), Tacoma, WA 98402.

**FILING** - To apply for an Order Changing Name, you must complete the interview process online. You may use any computer with internet access. For your convenience, there are public computers (Kiosks), which you may use to complete the interview process or make any corrections, located in the Pierce County Law Library, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, County-City Building, 930 Tacoma Ave S, Tacoma, WA 98402.

After answering the interview questions and submitting your petition, you will be given a confirmation number; write this number down and bring it with you when you appear at the public counter (you will need this number to make any corrections to your answers).

You must appear within 72 hours from the time that you submitted your answers to the interview questions. When you appear at the public counter, your interview answers will create a Petition for Change of Name; the clerk will review this petition with you to ensure that the information is correct. If the information is not correct, you will be directed to the public Law Library computers (kiosks) so that you may correct. After making the corrections you will return to room 239 for review; after the answers are accepted by the clerk, you will pay the filing fees, receive a copy of your name change petition and receive a court date.

**Pierce County District Court had adopted the following guidelines for persons requesting a name change:**

1. Minors under ten (10) are not required to be present at the hearing.
2. Minors between the ages of 10 and 17 years **must** be present at the hearing.
3. Persons 18 years and older **must** be present at the hearing.
4. All minors (age 17 and younger) **require a certified copy** of their birth certificate to be submitted at the time of filing the name change. The clerk will make a copy for the court's file and return the original certified copy to the petitioner. Adults changing their name may also be required to provide a certified copy of their birth certificate.
5. Proof of residency is required for all Petitioners, submitted at the time of filing. Washington State Photo ID or Driver's License; copy of current household bill indicating residence is in Pierce County, are acceptable. The clerk will make a copy for the court's file.

**FEES** -The filing fee is **\$204.00** CASH OR CREDIT CARD (VISA or MASTERCARD, no checks are accepted); payable at the time of appearance at the counter and the filing of the Name Change. The breakdown of the fee is as follows:

**\$83.00**/Filing Fee      **\$15.00**/Certification Fee      **\$7.00**/Administrative Fee      **\$99.00**/Auditor's Recording Fee

**FAMILY NAME CHANGE** - If a family name is changed (i.e., father, mother, minor children), each additional family member is included in the online interview questions, and will be issued a separate Order Changing Name. A family name change is filed under one case number and one filing fee. For each family member changing their name there will be an additional \$114.00 fee to cover the certification fees and recording fee for the Pierce County Auditor.

**MINOR CHILD NAME CHANGE** - If you are requesting a name change for a minor (under 18 years of age), and both birth parents are present, both must agree to the Name Change (may be required to sign a statement). If the other parent is absent, an affidavit must be provided stating agreement with and consent to the minor's name change. A blank affidavit form is available online or from the clerk. If the absent parent does not consent to the name change, a hearing will be set and petitioner must serve the other parent the hearing notice; proof of service on the other parent must be provided to the court. \*See Minor Name Change Information Sheet

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/SEALING OF NAME CHANGE** – Name Changes are public records, unless, you or your minor child(ren) are victims of domestic violence and request that the name change be sealed, you will be referred to Pierce County Superior Court (930 Tacoma Ave S, Room 110, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Tacoma, WA 98402) to proceed with your name change.

**CRIMINAL CONVICTION** - If you have been convicted of a felony, you may be requested by the Judge to supply proof that you are no longer under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections. If you are still subject to the penalties of said conviction and are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections, see RCW 4.24.130(2) and (3) and RCW 9a.44.130(7). If you have outstanding actions in Pierce County District Court or other courts, you may be required to resolve those cases before your name change will be considered.

**COPIES** - After the Order is signed, the petitioner will be directed to return to the counter where the counter clerk will provide two certified copies of the Order Changing Name. The Court will route the third copy of the Order to the Pierce County Auditor. After recording the Order Changing Name, the Auditor will mail the certified, recorded copy to the petitioner at the address listed on the Order. Additional certified copies are \$5.00 each.

#### **REQUIRED NOTIFICATION TO OTHER AGENCIES**

- If you or your minor child were born in Washington State and you wish to change your name on the birth certificate, the **Department of Vital Records/Health Department, requires a certified copy of the Order Changing Name.** You must mail the certified copy to the State Department of Vital Records, P.O. Box 9709 ET-14, Olympia, WA 98504-9709. Approximately four (4) weeks after mailing, you may request a copy of the birth certificate reflecting the name change from the local office. The charge for this is \$20.00 cash, credit card, or certified check. Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The local Vital Records Department is located at 3629 South D, Tacoma, WA 98408; counter hours Monday – Friday - 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. phone number is 253-798-6413.
- If reverting to a birth name there is no need to change your name through Vital Records.
- The **Social Security Department** requests and keeps a certified copy of the name change. The address of the local office is: 2608 South 47<sup>th</sup> Street, Tacoma, WA 98408 OR 811 S. Hill Drive, Puyallup, WA 98373.
- **Department of Licensing** requires a copy, filed and certified by the court, to issue a new license.

Additional notifications: School, work, credit companies, etc. do not generally require a copy of the name change – either verbal or written notification; check with the company for their policy.

Military members: You will need an additional certified copy for your military records.

#### **HEARING AND COURTROOM PROCEDURE**

Name Changes may be heard the same day after filing, depending on the type of name change, time of filing and courtroom schedule; otherwise, a future hearing date will be set, generally on a Thursday at 9:00 a.m.

The Judge will call the Petitioner's name (or minor child's name) report to the counsel table in the front of the Courtroom. The Judge will require you to answer questions regarding the name change; if a minor is present, the Judge will require the minor to answer questions. If the Judge allows the name change, you will return to the counter (room 239) and your certified copies will be made.

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[www.piercecountywa.org/districtcrt](http://www.piercecountywa.org/districtcrt)

**MINOR NAME CHANGE INFORMATION**

If both parents agree to the name change and are both present, both will go into the courtroom before the Judge. If there is an absent parent and the minor child's name change is agreed to, an affidavit of consent form must be submitted to the Judge. The written consent form **MUST** be notarized. A blank affidavit consent form is available **online** or from the counter clerk. If there is written consent from the absent birth parent to change the minor's name, the hearing on the name change may be presented ex parte.

**If the parents do not agree to change the minor's name, the absent parent must be served with a notice of your intent to change the name(s) of the minor(s).** The Court will provide you with a **Notice of Hearing** form. This notice will advise the absent parent of your intent to change the minor child's name along with the date, time and location of the hearing.

The absent parent is to be given an opportunity to appear at the hearing, where the Judicial Officer will determine what is in the best interests of the child(ren). **PLEASE NOTE:** This agreement or notification is required even if the absent birth parent is not named on the child's birth certificate. If there is written consent from the absent birth parent to change the minor's name, the hearing on the name change may be presented ex parte.

If there is no written consent form from the absent birth parent, notice must be served on the absent parent.

**SERVICE**

**PERSONAL SERVICE** means that the absent parent is personally given a copy of the Notice of Hearing and Petition. These documents **MUST** be given to the absent parent at least twenty (20) days prior to the hearing date. **YOU CANNOT PERSONALLY SERVE** the absent parent. Service of the Notice and Petition can be accomplished by the following:

**Process Server** who will serve the documents on the absent parent and provide an affidavit of service stating when and where the absent parent was served. You can find a Process Server in the yellow page directory under Process Servers or online. There is a charge for this service.

**MAIL** - You may serve the absent parent by mailing a copy of the Notice **and** Petition by Certified Mail, Restricted Delivery with a return Receipt Requested. Restricted delivery tells the post office that only the addressee may sign for the mail. You will receive the return receipt bearing the absent parent's signature which you must present to the court at the hearing. If someone other than the absent parent signs for the Notice and Petition or the absent parent refuses to sign for the certified mail, service was not made on the absent parent.

**PUBLICATION** - If you do not know the address or cannot locate the absent parent, you may request the court to issue an Order of Publication, meaning that the Notice will be published in a newspaper. Before publication is allowed, **every effort must be made to locate the absent parent.** You should contact relatives, friends or associates of the absent birth parent to find him/her; you are also required to mail a copy of the petition for name change and notice of hearing to the last known address of the absent parent, by certified return receipt; an affidavit of mailing will be required. You must file a Motion and Declaration in support of Publication In lieu of Personal Service which the Judge must order before you begin the publication process. The forms are available from the clerk.

After the Judge orders service by publication, the clerk will provide you with a copy of the Notice of Hearing, which is directed to the absent birth parent and contains the date, time and location of the hearing and information as to the name change specifics. This notice must be published in a newspaper, once a week for three consecutive weeks. There are several newspapers to choose from in any city and they can be found in a yellow page directory or online. Some newspapers specialize in publishing legal notices. You may wish to compare rates for publication in different newspapers as publishing the notice can be expensive. You must choose a newspaper that will provide an **AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION.** This is the proof that the Notice of Hearing was published. The Notice **must** be

published in the city of the last known address of the absent birth parent. The affidavit of publication is required to have a copy of the notice published by the newspaper included and must show the dates the notice was published. If the absent parent is the father, his whereabouts cannot be found, and/or his name is **not** listed on the minor's birth certificate, the Notice of Hearing may be published where the minor was born.

## **HEARING DATE**

On the scheduled hearing date, **YOU MUST APPEAR** at Pierce County District Court located at 930 Tacoma Avenue S., (the assigned courtroom number will be on your Notice of Hearing), Tacoma, 98402.

You must submit the affidavit of service, returned mail receipt or affidavit of publication, to prove that the absent parent received the Notice of Hearing.

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2. Minors between the ages of 10 and 17 years **must** be present at the hearing.
3. All minors (age 17 and younger) **require** a copy of their birth certificate to be submitted at the time of filing the name change.

**If proof of service is not provided or found to be insufficient, the name change for the minor child will not be granted.**